

# focus



Abu Dhabi, February 2012

Vol 36 (2)



Emirates Natural History Group

Patron: H.E. Sheikh Nahayan bin Mubarak Al Nahayan

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to another bumper issue of *Focus*. February has been busy with two great talks and several field trips for members. This month features the ENHG's big annual event with Inter-Emirates Weekend 2012, being hosted by the DNHG in Dubai from 23rd-25th Feb. This event provides the opportunity for members from all four groups of ENHG to explore special corners of Dubai, meet up with old friends and generally have a very enjoyable weekend. Updates about this event have been sent round to members, and trip sign-ups have now closed. The *Focus* Editor will welcome submissions of IEW 2012 photos and trip write-ups for future issues.

Excitingly, we are now four groups, and I would like to give a warm welcome to the Emirates Natural History Group of Fujairah, which held its inaugural meeting at Fujairah Men's College on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2012. We look forward to meeting their new members at the IEW.

Meanwhile, we have an invitation to be observers at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Species Survival Commission (SSC) Chairs meeting on Yas Island in Abu Dhabi. This is being hosted by the Environment Agency – Abu Dhabi (EAD). The meeting as a whole will run from 23rd February through to 27th February and will start at 8.30am on Thursday 23rd February, 2012, with the official Opening Ceremony to be held from 10.30am. It is a pity it clashes with IEW, but I hope to see others of you there on the Thursday and Sunday. Please see the IUCN links on the bottom of p 8 if you are interested:

Sadly, we received the unhappy news of Bob Reimer's death in the past month. Bob was a very active member in the Al Ain group who did some ground-breaking work on the dragonflies of the UAE about which he gave us two fascinating talks and had been planning to give us a third. He was always willing to lead field trips for us, and he will be greatly missed. Please see his obituary on p 4.

We would like to give a big thanks to Simon Strickland for stepping forward as Book Stall Coordinator and to Kiya for aptly taking on the Lecture Coordinator role. We also welcome Stephanie Baldwin & Zander Rupp to the Committee. The Committee meets at 6pm before the lecture on the first Tuesday of the month; any member is welcome to join us or contribute ideas. You don't have to sign up for a formal committee position to attend.

I would now like to make a personal appeal for a new Excursion Secretary to come forward for the coming season, starting in Oct 2012. I am hoping someone will volunteer before May and can come on some trips and see how easy it really is, as well as pick my brains for advice. All that is needed is some enthusiasm to explore areas of the UAE and a free weekend roughly once a month, in fact not even that often nowadays. We now have several members who are volunteer trip leaders, who take out 1-3 trips a year, and all that is required in this case is some oversight and coordination. My real secret for success has been the UAE Off-Road Explorer combined with knowing some old hands who can give pointers to less well-known secrets and interesting natural history to explore. All of these contacts I am happy to pass on, along with the custodianship of the Group's field trip equipment (see p 10). I have found

## In this issue

- Page 1:** Front cover  
**Page 2:** Editorial, Answers: Beginning Birders Quiz  
**Page 3:** Butterfly Bonus  
**Page 4:** In Remembrance: Bob Reimer  
**Page 5:** Emirati Photographer Aims to Raise Awareness of Bird Conservation  
**Page 6:** Recent Speaker  
**Page 7:** Upcoming Speakers  
**Page 8:** In the Local News Media, Websites of General Interest  
**Page 9:** Corporate Sponsors, ENHG Bookstall  
**Page 10:** Committee Members, Lectures, Field Trips, Research & Conservation Fund, Equipment for Members' Use, Marine Life Rescue Contact Info., Newsletter Details

### FRONT COVER PICTURE

Photograph: Egyptian Goose and goslings at AD Golf Club

Photographer: May Yoke Taylor

## This month's contributors

DNHG, Dick Hornby, Brigitte Howarth, Barbara Reimer, Keith Taylor, May Yoke Taylor, Vesela Todorova of The National

## ENHG Membership Information

Annual membership in the Abu Dhabi chapter of the ENHG is 100 Dhs – for both individual and family membership. See Membership Sec. or Asst. at the next meeting for a membership form.

Members are entitled to join the group on all day trips and overnight camping trips. Each member is also entitled to a copy of the ENHG's normally annual peer-reviewed journal, *Tribulus*. Volume 19 is now available at meetings. Work on Volume 20 is now under way.

being Excursion Secretary a tremendously rewarding experience, met some wonderful friends (both local and ex-pat) and learnt a lot on the way.

Finally, it is still the beginning of the year, so we please ask everyone to renew their subscriptions for 2012. At 100 Dh it is incredibly good value and has not changed for many years. Membership on the mailing list will lapse at the end of March if you do not renew.

I look forward to seeing everyone at lecture meetings, lectures or the IEW.

**Andrew Bean**

## Answers: Beginning Birder Quiz #1

In [Jan 2012 Focus](#), we ran a beginning birder quiz with photos of four waders labelled simply A-D.

Here are the correct identifications for those four birds.

**A: Kentish Plover    B: Grey Plover**  
**C: Whimbrel        D: Common Snipe        –Ed.**

## Butterfly Bonus

The former fodder fields at Wathba, in the middle of the camel race track south of the Al Ain truck road, have changed dramatically since the irrigation water was turned off a few years ago. The grass has all died, but last winter there must have been strong growth of halophytic vegetation, mainly *Salsola imbricata*, which is now nearly all dead, and the place is currently looking pretty sad. There are, however, a few wet patches where prolonged seepage of waste irrigation water has created very lush growth of vegetation. Most of these are composed primarily of reed *Phragmites australis*, but others contain *Salvadora persica*, *Sesuvium verrucosum* and *Malva parviflora*, among other species.

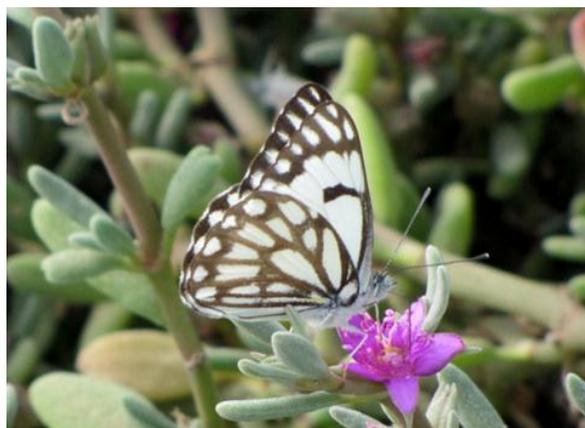
On 4<sup>th</sup> February I found the fodder fields disappointing for birds, but, much to my surprise, one of these lush patches proved to be a Mecca for butterflies. I counted no fewer than eight species in ten minutes, something probably unprecedented in my twenty years in Abu Dhabi. There were four species from the "White" family (Pieridae) - Caper White, Blue-spotted Arab, Small Salmon Arab, and African Emigrant; two species from the "Blue" family (Lycaenidae) – Mediterranean Pierrot and Western Pigmy Blue, one Vanessaid – Painted Lady, and one skipper (Hesperiidae). Unfortunately I wasn't able to get a good look at the skipper, let alone

photograph it, but skippers are never common in UAE, so I was pleased to see this one. Some of the other species were quite obliging while they sipped nectar from flowers of *Sesuvium*, allowing me to capture them for posterity with my camera. I obtained reasonable photographs of four species, so I thought I would share them with ENHG members in the hope of stimulating a bit more butterfly recording (See below).

There were at least four African Emigrants, a species which only occurs in UAE sporadically. It occurs throughout the dryer parts of Africa but is very migratory and in good years erupts to spread over Arabia, the eastern Mediterranean and even as far as India. Its normal larval foodplant is *Cassia*, which cannot be found anywhere near Wathba, so presumably the butterflies are just passing through. One wonders how far they might go, and whether their presence at Wathba on 4<sup>th</sup> February, in fairly calm conditions, is associated with the high winds that prevailed over the preceding few days. On some days there had been very strong winds from the south, so it is possible that the African Emigrants had flown over the Empty Quarter from Dhofar, or further south. Against this hypothesis, they appeared to be in good condition. Presumably this is a one-way migration, giving the species the opportunity to extend its range in good times, but there is little chance of these visitors or their progeny ever boosting the core population back in Africa.



African Emigrant



Caper White



Small Salmon Arab



Western Pigmy Blue

**Dick Hornby**

**All photographs by the author**

## In Remembrance: Bob Reimer



We sadly say farewell to yet another stalwart member of the Natural History community in the UAE this season: Bob Reimer. The following remarks are adapted from a final update sent out to friends and well-wishers by his wife, Barbara, from an obituary that appeared on the website Lifeneews.ca and from a message sent round by ENHG Chair Brigitte Howarth.

On Wednesday, January 25th, 2012, at age 58, after a valiant fight against melanoma, ENHG-AI Ain Vice Chair Bob Reimer passed away quietly at "home" in Markham, Ontario, Canada. To the end, Bob was brave and strong, but his body just could not handle the demands of living any longer. His brother, David, and his wife Barbara were with him as he took his last, quiet breath and drifted away at 2:35 on January 25th. A service to celebrate Bob's amazing life was held on Saturday, January 28th, 2012 in Bob's hometown in Canada.

Bob touched many lives in different ways, with his wide knowledge, humour, insight, compassion, understanding and gentle spirit. Those who knew him well understand that mere words cannot scratch the surface when describing the man he was, given his wide range of interests—computing; natural history; sumo gaming; photography; research on dragonflies that led to both recognition of his expertise and the discovery of a midge new to science; wandering the Wadis of Oman and UAE; a passion for music that involved him on the K-W Symphony Board and with the AI Ain Classical Music Festival; the joy of good friends and fellowship...the list could go on and on.

Bob leaves behind many to celebrate his life: wife Barbara Ruth, son and family Aaron, Vanessa and wonderful grandson Dune, mother Barbara Helen, wife of the late Harry J. Reimer, brother David James, as well as many other relatives and good friends who will hold him in their hearts and minds, remembering all he gave so willingly.

Many members of the ENHG-AI Ain, as well as some from other chapters, would have had an opportunity at some point to spend time in the field with Bob and would have experienced his enthusiasm and knowledge in

many areas of natural history and photography, and in particular his knowledge of the Odonata (Dragonflies and Damselflies). Bob was an active Committee member of the AI Ain Chapter of the ENHG, and was involved in many projects. Some of the results of his photography and research have been published in text or photographic form in a variety of publications, listed below, and also shared at international conferences, and via many online forums.

Bob also took on various roles as an ENHG Committee member such as Vice Chair, Photography Coordinator, Website Administrator, and helped in the curation of our Joint AI Ain and Abu Dhabi Entomological collection, as well as participating in a variety of Outreach activities. He presented excellent talks to the AI Ain ENHG, Abu Dhabi ENHG and Dubai Chapter (DNHG), and led many a field trip. Fittingly, he was the recipient of the Bish Brown Natural History Award for 2007 in recognition of these contributions.

Bob became an authority on the Odonata of the UAE and was thrilled to be asked to become \*Secretary of the Worldwide Dragonfly Association\* last year. A highlight of his explorations into entomology was his discovery of a midge riding on the wings of dragonflies and damselflies, with the midge being a new scientific discovery. Bob documented this discovery in a manuscript that will shortly be published.

There were many facets to Bob; he viewed the world from an eclectic standpoint and had many interests and skills beyond those associated with natural history. His computing skills were exceptional, and his drive for becoming intricately familiar with whatever project he was working on meant that within a short time Bob would get a handle on and master just about everything he turned his mind to. We will all miss a dear friend but are fortunate to have many memories of many happy moments. Our thoughts are with his wife Barb, their son Aaron, and all of Bob's family as everyone comes to terms with this sad loss. Many of you know Barb and may wish to write to her personally. We will also collate thoughts to celebrate Bob's life via our remembrance email and so if you would like to share thoughts or stories, you can send an email to [remembrance@enhg.org](mailto:remembrance@enhg.org)

In lieu of flowers, Bob's family would appreciate donations to organizations that supported and helped Bob so much in his fight against melanoma. The International Cancer Advocacy Network (ICAN) in Phoenix, Arizona, was phenomenal in constant support, advice, connections and tenacity. Their website is [www.askican.org](http://www.askican.org). All donations given in Bob's name will be earmarked for the establishment of a Robert W. Reimer Biomarkers Center, to continue the research for genetic answers to melanoma. There are discussions underway to see if this can be made an international effort. If tax receipts are desired, donations can be made either to Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto, where so many medical personnel worked hard to prolong Bob's life or to Evergreen Hospice of Markham – Stouffville, who provided wonderful emotional & practical support. Their website is [www.evergreenhospice.org](http://www.evergreenhospice.org). If you have a particular charity that you would prefer to support, Bob's family would welcome that, as well.

**Bob Reimer's Publications:**

Reimer, R.W., Havelka, P. & Martens, A. A new Oman Forcipomyia (Diptera: Nematocera: Ceratopogonidae) from the wings of Odonata. In prep.

Campbell, O.J. and Reimer, R.W. 2011. An influx of \*Sympetrum fonscolombii\*Selys in the United Arab Emirates. \*Agrion\* 15.1: 20-21.

Reimer, R.W. 2011. \*Tramea basilaris\* (Beauvais, 1817) new to UAE. \*Agrion\* 15.1: 22-23.

Reimer, R.W., Feulner, G.R. and Hornby, R.J. 2009. Errata and Addenda: Updated Illustrated Checklist of Dragonflies of the UAE – including a third species of *Ischnura damselfly*. \*Tribulus\* 18: 28-36.

Reimer, R.W. 2008. An extraordinary confluence of events in the study of UAE and Oman Odonata. \*Agrion\* 12.2: 55

Feulner, G.R., Reimer, R.W. and Hornby, R.J. 2007. Updated and Illustrated Checklist of Dragonflies of the UAE. \*Tribulus\* 17: 37-62.

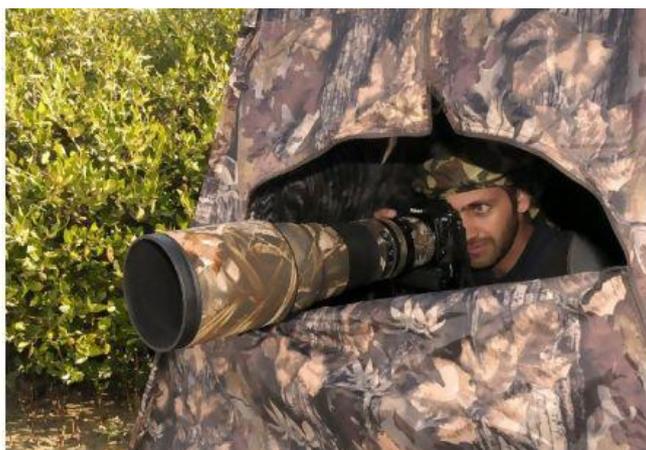
Contributing Photographer, \*Terrestrial Environment of Abu Dhabi Emirate\*, 2008, Environmental Agency – Abu Dhabi.

Contributing Photographer, \*The Emirates - A Natural History\*, December 2005, Trident Press, ISBN 1-905486-02-2.

Contributing Photographer, \*Jebel Hafit, A Natural History\*, 2004, Emirates Natural History Group sponsored by the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations, ISBN 9948-03-143-1.

*Barbara Reimer / Brigitte Howarth // Keith Taylor*

## Emirati Photographer Aims to Raise Awareness of Bird Conservation



Ahmed Al Ali uses his lens as a weapon to showcase the rich diversity of birdlife in the UAE

*This article below, published in The National on Jan 15, 2012, is reprinted here, with permission of the author, Environment Correspondent Vesela Todorova. A brief biography, along with the photo below, was run in the December 2011 issue of Focus following the presentation of the team this photographer was an integral part of, surveying the endangered race of*

*Collared Kingfishers of Khor Kalba in an ENHG-sponsored project. – Ed.*

While trying to explain his interest in birds and wildlife photography to sceptics, Ahmed Al Ali often asks them to guess the number of bird species living in or visiting the UAE.

They usually say 10 or 20. But the correct answer, he says, is 443.

"This is all because you don't see," said the 30-year-old UAE national from Sharjah. "You skip, you do not pay attention. If you pay attention you will see."

Mr Al Ali, an IT professional at a Government department in Abu Dhabi, is one of few Emiratis who has taken to observing and photographing birds. His hobby has changed him, and is influencing his community.

A precise, eloquent man, Mr Al Ali is aware of the value of explaining the natural world with facts. But his strongest weapon is his photography.

"I take pictures of birds in all situations - morning and evening, while they are eating, showering, dusting, fighting," he said.

While making the case for the need to preserve bird habitats, he shows people beautiful pictures of the amazing array of rare resident and visiting birds. This can get them emotionally involved, he said.

"This is the key to interest local people," he said. "After all, the same thing happened to me. After five years of photography, I find myself slipping more into wildlife and conservation."

It was the beauty of the birds that drew Mr Al Ali's interest in them as photography subjects. Before he took up photography, he was drawing - and horses were his favourite subject.

In 2005, he started practising photography, learning from online forums where photographers from other Gulf countries would post their work and offer advice to each other. It was in early 2007, after seeing the work of a Kuwaiti photographer, that he decided to make birds his subjects.

"The start was with obvious birds you can see everywhere," he said, naming his first subjects - the house sparrow, the common mynah and the parakeet. "Then I started to read and read and I discovered there is this thing called bird watching."

He got in touch with members of the Emirates Bird Records Committee. Through reading and interacting with the group, he started to learn the names of different bird species and the best locations where they could be observed. The new hobby took favour over his other interests such as amateur radio, now only done while he is driving, and video games, which he has stopped playing.

"Whenever I find time, I either read about birds or I go to look for birds," said Mr Al Ali, who recently became the UAE regional representative of the Ornithological Society of the Middle East.

He recently lectured at Kalba, showing a small but interested group of attendees what the rare birds

inhabiting the town's unique mangrove forest and beaches look like.

As he discussed his hobby, he was interrupted by a telephone call from Abdulla Al Za'abi in Kalba, asking for the phone number of environmental officials. Mr Al Za'abi had noticed men trapping seagulls, most likely with the aim of selling them to falconers, and wanted to report it to authorities.

However, when the two men had first met, Mr Al Za'abi was less aware of these issues, and could not believe anyone would want to hire a fishing boat just to watch sea birds.

What helped Mr Al Ali advance as a photographer was reading about birds, interacting with bird watchers, and practice.

"When you try something for a little bit of time, you get used to it," he said.

Also important is attention to detail and patience, which, he said, "is the prime thing in wildlife photography because you are photographing a moving thing".

It took several months for him to photograph the Collared Kingfisher in Kalba's mangrove. The bird is shy and quiet, and it takes a long time to find it among the dense branches of mangroves.

The masked shrike, a small, shy migrant that visits briefly in spring, is another example.

"It took me two or three years to find this bird and I only got one decent picture," he said.

Because of the novelty of his hobby, Mr Al Ali has also seen his share of uncomfortable situations. His large lens sometimes makes people suspicious about his intentions. He has been followed by curious onlookers, which scares away the birds he is looking to photograph. Occasionally, he is stopped by village elders and police.

Yet, the enjoyment he gets from producing a beautiful picture is worth it, he said. And so is the effort to educate others on the need to preserve the country's natural heritage.

"If I was aware of this issue before going to college, I would have studied environmental science," he said. "Our education did not give us the chance to see the environment."

He said more work needs to be done to raise awareness of environmental issues.

"As they say, no one is bad. There are just people who do not know better."

**Vesela Todorova**

## Recent Speakers

**Ronnie Gallagher** started his working life as a biology teacher in Glasgow and moved to the Shetland Isles in '78 to get away from city life and enjoy the wild outdoors. Diving, marine biology, underwater photography and bird watching were main pastimes and opened the door to a terrific job as BP's Environmental Officer at Sullom Voe Terminal. This provided important training for career development in environmental monitoring and management. Highlights from Shetland were the

development of an oil spill wildlife response plan, and successfully putting it to the test with the stranding of the Braer oil tanker in 1993 which released around 85,000 tonnes of crude into Shetlands pristine environment. His secondment into UKOOA, to successfully manage the Braer wildlife response led later that year to Ronnie being seconded by BP into Kuwait. There he assisted the Kuwait Oil Company develop an environmental department and had the chance to assist in studies of oil spill damage resulting from the first Gulf War.

His next job was in Abu Dhabi with ADCO, where he helped develop the first Field Environmental Engineers and introduced improved environmental management practices. He enjoyed outings with the Natural History Group between 1997 and 2000 and developed a fascination for archaeology: interests he took with him to his next posting in Azerbaijan.

With nine of the world's eleven climate zones and some fascinating geology, including the world's densest concentration of mud volcanoes, Azerbaijan offers amazing natural history diversity and study opportunities. Megalithic remains are also abundant and provided further motivation to explore the countryside to seek out evidence of man's prehistoric past. Much was found and recorded such as stone circles, cart ruts, stranding stones, rock shelters chambered cairns and rock art. It was there in a land of mystery and intrigue – one of the cradles of civilization – that previously unasked and unanswered questions to do with Caspian Sea level changes began to intrigue him. A tradition of massive landscape images – zoomorphic or anthropomorphic images also became apparent. These testified to a deep rooted animistic culture: something that has yet to be recognized and acknowledged by archaeology.



**Hunters & Sun Boat: Rock Art from Gobustan**

Fundamental questions about the past elevation of the Caspian Sea level and how its vagaries influenced ancient peoples are largely unknown and unstudied. The evidence of flooding, as seen in the form of raised

terraces and strandlines, clearly tell a very different story from the accepted understanding of tectonic uplift and limited Ice Age sea level rise.

Recognizing that something was not right with scientific understanding of prehistory and environmental conditions led to lots of field work, research and participation in several Caspian / Black Sea conferences where he shared information and tried to find answers to questions. Ronnie is keen to encourage scientific interest in the Caspian flood questions and their potential significance to mankind at the dawn of civilisation. A recent publication in the Azeri Institute of Geology's journal – *Stratigraphy and Sedimentology*, hopefully will stimulate wider scientific interest and investigation. Other articles have been published in Azeri magazines and are available on-line. Career-wise, subsequent positions in the oil industry in Angola, Algeria and now in Abu Dhabi have enabled him to continue to visit Azerbaijan and continue his hobby.

His talk on 7<sup>th</sup> February will focus on evidence for Caspian Sea level changes, causes and potential significance. References to rock art and the possibility of it providing eye witness accounts of flood levels will also be highlighted. A later talk to the Natural History Group (probably near the start of the 2012-2013 season) will look into archaeological finds in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus and apparent regional cultural contacts: the latter most likely influenced by navigation from the Aral Sea, through the Caspian and Black Seas to the Mediterranean.

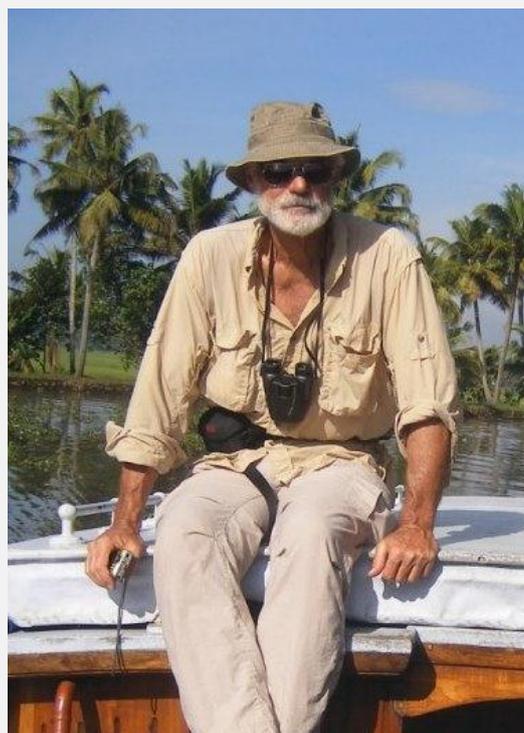


**Dr Lulu Skidmore** completed her initial BSc (Hons) degree in Animal Science at Wye College, University of London (UK), after which she spent 5 years working with Prof. WR (Twink) Allen at the Equine Fertility Unit, Newmarket as a research assistant working on several projects involving all aspects of equine reproduction. In 1991 she registered at University of Cambridge (UK) to start a PhD project entitled "Reproduction in the dromedary camel" under the supervision of Prof WR Allen, during which time she spent the camel breeding season (October – April) at the Camel Reproduction Centre in Dubai doing field work with the camels. Since completing her PhD in 1994 she has been employed as the Scientific Director of the Camel Reproduction Centre in Dubai to continue projects involving all aspects of camel reproduction such as embryo transfer of fresh, cooled and frozen embryos, artificial insemination of

fresh, cooled and frozen semen, follicular dynamics and hormone concentrations throughout the oestrous cycle, diagnosis and endocrinology of pregnancy, control of luteolysis and maternal recognition of pregnancy, hybridization of New and Old World Camelids.

On 21<sup>st</sup> Feb Dr. Skidmore gave the ENHG a fascinating, informative presentation titled *Adaptations of Camels to the Desert Environment and the Work of the Camel Reproduction Centre*. In her lecture, Dr Skidmore talked about the unique eating, drinking and behavioural characteristics of camels and their fascinating anatomical adaptations, such as their fat-storing hump, small ears, long eyelashes and circular foot pads, all of which enable them to live in arid desert environments.

She also discussed the work of the Camel Reproduction Centre over the last 20 years, which has included research into the unusual reproductive behaviour of camels, methods of diagnosing pregnancy from as early as 14 days & assisted reproductive techniques for increasing their reproductive performance. Her updates on the four surviving camelid hybrids (with llama or guanaco mums and camel dads), all evidently sterile, were of particular interest.



DNHG Chairman **Gary Feulner** has had a lifelong interest in evolutionary biology, biogeography and ecology, as well as the evolution of the earth itself. He holds degrees in geology from Princeton and Yale universities and did academic field work in the Northern Apennines, the Zambian Copperbelt and the Andes of southern Ecuador. Although he subsequently practised professionally as a corporate lawyer, he has continued to indulge his scientific interests in the UAE, where for more than 25 years he has explored widely (much of it in the era before fences), observing and studying a broad range of animals, plants and natural phenomena. Among other things, he is the author or co-author of the (so far) definitive surveys of the wadi fish, freshwater and land snails, dragonflies and intertidal molluscs of the

UAE and northern Oman, as well as the flora of the mountains of the Musandam Peninsula (the Ru'us al-Jibal). He has also published on the geology of the UAE and on discrete aspects of local climate, geomorphology and the behaviour and/or ecology of selected species, and has made substantial contributions to databases for UAE reptiles and UAE butterflies. He has been Chairman of the Dubai Natural History Group for 15 years.

On 6<sup>th</sup> March Gary will give a presentation titled *An Introduction to the Natural History of the Mountains of the UAE*. His presentation will be a wide-ranging pictorial introduction to the geology and geography of the mountains of the UAE and to the diversity of plants and animals that can be found there, including both common species that visitors to the mountains are most likely to see and rare ones that they should be on the lookout for. Along the way, he will try to indicate the many resources that exist today for the study of local natural history, and also to highlight questions still to be answered.

*The Editor thanks the above speakers for providing autobiographical information & photos for Focus.*

### In the Local News Media

The National, Oct 11, 2011: [Ancient city of 70,000 uncovered in RAK](#)

The National, Jan 14: [New pearl museum opens in RAK](#)

The National, Jan 19: ['Superficial' studies harm environment](#)

Gulf News, Jan 20: [Marine biodiversity under threat](#)

The National, Jan 24: [Plant fuel test for jets nears take-off](#)

Khaleej Times, Feb 2: [20 turtles wash up on Saadiyat this winter](#)

Khaleej Times, Feb 7: [Sultan releases wild animals in reserve](#)

The National, Feb 8: [RAK reverses cycle of energy use](#)

The National, Feb 8: [DNA evidence suggests the whole world is a little bit Arab](#)

The National, Feb 9: [Time travel island to open soon in Dubai](#)

The National, Feb 12: [Support 'urgently needed' for local documentaries](#)

The National, Feb 14: [Subterranean cleaners take out the rubbish](#)

Gulf News, Feb 17: [34-foot vessel to protect marine life](#)

Gulf News, Feb 18: [Pupils relish chance to get their hands dirty](#)

The National, Feb 19: [Luxury oasis lures wildlife](#)

Gulf News, Feb 20: [Abu Dhabi environmental atlas released](#)

Gulf News, Feb 20: [Habitat loss threatens only kingfisher species in UAE](#)

### Websites of General Interest

#### Local & Regional:

Emirates Natural History Group – Al Ain (Archives: newsletters of 3 NHGs, *Tribulus*): <http://www.enhg.org>

Dubai Natural History Group: <http://dnhg.org>

Qatar Natural History Group: <http://www.qnhg.org>

Tommy Pedersen's UAE Birding / UAE Nature Forum: <http://www.uaebirding.com>

Jewels of the UAE: <http://www.arkive.org/uae/en>

Hanne & Jens Eriksen's website: [www.BirdsOman.com](http://www.BirdsOman.com)

Emirates Soc. of Geoscience: <http://www.esg-uae.org>

Emirates Marine Environmental Group: [www.emeg.ae](http://www.emeg.ae)

Emirates Diving Association: <http://www.emiratesdiving.com/index.php>

Emirates Wildlife Society – World Wildlife Fund: [http://wwf.panda.org/who\\_we\\_are/wwf\\_offices/united\\_arab\\_emirates/](http://wwf.panda.org/who_we_are/wwf_offices/united_arab_emirates/)

Environment Agency Abu Dhabi: <http://www.ead.ae/en>

UAE Environmental Atlas (Sign up for notice of release): <http://www.environmentalatlus.ae/>

Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage <http://www.adach.ae/en>

UAE archaeology website: <http://www.adias-uae.com>

Noukhada Adventure Co.: <http://noukhada.ae>

NYUAD Events Calendar: <http://nyuad.nyu.edu/news.events/events.ad.html>

Khalifa University Events Calendar: <http://www.kustar.ac.ae/campus/dss/schedules/default.aspx>

Sharjah Museums: <http://www.sharjahmuseums.ae>

Wildlife Middle East News: <http://www.wmenews.com>

Arabian Wildlife: <http://www.arabianwildlife.com/main.htm>

Zoology in the Middle East (Peer-reviewed ISI Journal): <http://www.kasperek-verlag.de/ZME-allgem.htm>

Sharkwatch Arabia: <http://www.sharkwatcharabia.com>

Foundation for the Protection of the Arabian Leopard in Yemen: <http://www.yemenileopard.org>

Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund: <http://www.mbzspeciesconservation.org/>

#### International:

EDGE: Evolutionarily Distinct and Globally Endangered: <http://www.edgeofexistence.org>

UNEP Protected Planet: <http://www.protectedplanet.net>

Wikispecies: <http://species.wikimedia.org/wiki>

Sand Atlas: <http://sandatlas.org>

IUCN Websites: [http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/who\\_we\\_are/about\\_the\\_species\\_survival\\_commission/ssc\\_members\\_\\_area/iucn\\_ssc\\_chairs\\_meeting\\_2012/](http://www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/species/who_we_are/about_the_species_survival_commission/ssc_members__area/iucn_ssc_chairs_meeting_2012/)

[http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/2012\\_ssc\\_chairs\\_meeting\\_agenda\\_v1.pdf](http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/2012_ssc_chairs_meeting_agenda_v1.pdf)

### Corporate Sponsors of the ENHG - 2011

These companies are supporting the ENHG activities in the region. We hope you as ENHG members will in turn support these companies whenever you can. Click on the links below for information about the sponsors.

<b>AECOM</b>	
<b>Bin Moosa &amp; Daly</b>	
<b>British Petroleum</b>	
<b>Dolphin Energy</b>	
<b>Dome International L.L.C.</b>	
<b>Exova</b>	
<b>ExxonMobil</b>	
<b>Fugro Survey (Middle East) Ltd.</b>	
<b>International Bechtel Company, Ltd.</b>	
<b>Kharafi National</b>	
<b>Al Masaood Group</b>	
<b>Mott MacDonald, Ltd.</b>	
<b>Nautica Environmental Associates L.L.C.</b>	
<b>Partex Oil and Gas</b>	
<b>Readymix Abu Dhabi Limited L.L.C. (Scroll down to 7<sup>th</sup> entry)</b>	
<b>Shell</b>	
<b>Total ABK</b>	

<b>Ultra Dascam (Shaheen)</b>	
<b>URS</b>	
<b>Wave Craft, Ltd. (Auditor Nick Benges's Co.)</b>	
<b>WSP Group</b>	

### ITEMS ON SALE AT THE ENHG BOOK STALL

All prices are in dirhams.

- The Emirates – A Natural History, 350  
*The first complete referencing guide to the wildlife of the UAE. 580 colour photos*
- Jebel Hafit – A Natural History, 100  
*An attractive, encyclopaedic presentation of the natural resources of this local landmark. (Free copies available for schools donations.)*
- Wild about Mammals, 40
- Wild about Reptiles, 40
- Breeding Birds of the United Arab Emirates, 100
- Abu Dhabi Bird checklist, 10
- Sandgrouse checklist of the birds of the United Arab Emirates, 25
- Emirates Bird Report, 20
- Birdwatching guide to Oman, 2nd edition, 100  
*Guide to bird watching spots in Oman.*
- Common Birds in Oman, 2nd ed, 120
- Butterflies of Saudi Arabia & its neighbours, 90
- UAE in Focus, 100
- Natural History of Oman, 50
- Field Guide to the Geology of Oman, 75
- Abu Dhabi 8 Million Years ago, 15
- Arabian Wildlife Encyclopedia, 120
- Sulphur, Camels and Gunpowder, 100
- Native Plants of Oman, 80
- Little O in Oman, 25
- Wild Flowers of the UAE, 110
- Marine Environment, Resource of the UAE, 140
- Flowering Plants of the UAE, 60
- Socotra Calendar – 2012, 35

## Committee Members

Andrew Bean  
(Chairman / Outgoing Excursion Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-322-1327  
[rabean@eim.ae](mailto:rabean@eim.ae)

Keith Taylor  
(Deputy Chairman / Focus Editor)  
Mobile: 050-820-4938  
[kjtaylor13@yahoo.com](mailto:kjtaylor13@yahoo.com)

Julie Bird (Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-615-4757  
[julieinad@yahoo.com](mailto:julieinad@yahoo.com)

Ron Priestley (Treasurer)  
Mobile: 050-315-9908  
[ronprst@gmail.com](mailto:ronprst@gmail.com)

Barbara Barton Smith  
(Membership Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-761-6880  
[barbbartonsmith@yahoo.com](mailto:barbbartonsmith@yahoo.com)

Avra Theophanous  
(Corporate Sponsorship Secretary & Asst. Membership Secretary)  
[avra.theophanous@gmail.com](mailto:avra.theophanous@gmail.com)

Feng Wen  
(Assistant Excursion Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-622-1485  
[feng.wen@adpc.ae](mailto:feng.wen@adpc.ae)

Claudia Gehre  
(Public Relations Secretary)  
Mobile: 050-5526-3026  
[ccgehre@gmail.com](mailto:ccgehre@gmail.com)

Kiya Murman  
(Lecture Coordinator)  
Mobile: 050-392-8973  
[kmurman@ecae.ac.ae](mailto:kmurman@ecae.ac.ae)

Peter Hellyer  
(Editor of *Tribulus* / Librarian)  
Mobile: 050-642-4357  
[peter@extinfo.gov.ae](mailto:peter@extinfo.gov.ae)

Dick Hornby (Member)  
Mobile: 050-662-4501  
[dnahornby@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:dnahornby@yahoo.co.uk)

Alexander (Zander) Rupp  
(Member)  
[ruppaw@eckerd.edu](mailto:ruppaw@eckerd.edu)

Stephanie Baldwin (Member)  
[stephanie.baldwin@mottmac.com](mailto:stephanie.baldwin@mottmac.com)

**Required: Excursion Secretary to organise and lead field trips next season. Can you do this?**

## Assistants

Simon Strickland  
Book Sales  
[simonlmandy@btinternet.com](mailto:simonlmandy@btinternet.com)

Sidney Liu  
A/V Assistance  
[sidneyliu@acs.sch.ae](mailto:sidneyliu@acs.sch.ae)

Alexander (Zander) Rupp  
Lecture Recording  
[ruppaw@eckerd.edu](mailto:ruppaw@eckerd.edu)

## Lectures

**Venue: HCT / Abu Dhabi Men's College**

Press CTRL+click [here](#) to view map/directions.

7<sup>th</sup> Feb **7:30 PM**

The Rise and Fall of the Ponto Caspian in the Ice Age: Ancient Mariners of the Asiatic Mediterranean

**Ronnie Gallagher**

21<sup>st</sup> Feb. **7:30 PM**

Adaptations of camels to the desert environment and the work of the Camel Reproduction Centre

**Dr Lulu Skidmore**

6<sup>th</sup> March **7:30 PM**

An Introduction to the Natural History of the Mountains of the UAE

**Gary Feulner**

20<sup>th</sup> March **7:30 PM**  
Ecological notes from Sir Bani Yas, Discovery Islands and Sir Bu Nair

**Keith Wilson**

## Field Trips

3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
Camping trip/walk on Jebel Shams, Oman  
**Feng Wen**

4<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
Al Wathba Lake Birding  
**Oscar Campbell**

10<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
Fossil Valley Walk in Buraimi, Oman  
**Feng Wen**

23<sup>rd</sup>/24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> Feb.  
Inter-Emirates Weekend  
**Host: DNHG**

## ENHG-AD Research & Conservation Fund Grant Application Information

For background on this fund, see [Dec 2009 Focus](#), p5.  
For research & grant application guidelines, click [here](#).  
For grant application form, click [here](#).

(Yahoo log-in may be required to open 2 above links.)

For further enquiries, contact ENHG Chairman Andrew Bean at [rabean@eim.ae](mailto:rabean@eim.ae).

## ENHG Equipment for Members' Use

The following ENHG equipment is available for members' use during field trips or on request:

- Birding Telescope
- GPS unit – GARMIN GPSMAP 60CSx
- First-Aid Kit
- Sky Scout astronomical object locator/identifier
- Celestron NexStar telescope (on field trips only)
- Two satellite phones, taken on camping trips.  
Phone numbers: No. 1: 008821644400956  
No. 2: 008821644400965

## Marine Life Rescue Contact Info.

In Abu Dhabi:

EAD Hotline for reporting environmental emergencies including pollution and injured wildlife: 8009990. Email: [envirocomplaint@ead.ae](mailto:envirocomplaint@ead.ae)

EAD Emergency response manager: Mr. Abdul Rahman. Mob: 0506674171 (contactable 24 hours/day)

EAD contact for sea turtles, dugongs and dolphins: Dr. Himansu Das, Biodiversity Management Sector. Tel: 26934654; Mob: 0504465125; Email: [hsdas@ead.ae](mailto:hsdas@ead.ae)

In Dubai:

Emirates Marine Environment Group (EMEG) (Tel: 043630581/Fax:043630460; Email: [info@emeg.ae](mailto:info@emeg.ae))

Dubai Municipality: Main number: 800900. Marine Environment & Sanctuaries Unit (Tel: +9714 606 6818, Fax +9714 703 3532), Email: [marabdulla@dm.gov.ae](mailto:marabdulla@dm.gov.ae).

Dubai Turtle Rehabilitation Centre at the Burj al Arab Aquarium. Tel: 043017198. 24-hour email contact, Attn. Mr Warren Baverstock, Manager of Operations, BAA Aquarium: [warren.baverstock@jumeirah.com](mailto:warren.baverstock@jumeirah.com)  
To post Facebook message triggering an after-hours SMS alert: [www.facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation](http://www.facebook.com/turtle.rehabilitation)

## Newsletter Details

Newsletter contributions to:  
[newsletter@chirri2000.com](mailto:newsletter@chirri2000.com)

## Members' Items for sale

Please send small ads to:  
[newsletter@chirri2000.com](mailto:newsletter@chirri2000.com)

## Postal Address

ENHG c/o Environment Agency -  
Abu Dhabi, PO Box 45553, Abu Dhabi

## Yahoo Groups website

<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/AUHENHG>  
(Click Join button to sign up for ENHG info.)